

**SERIES: The Quest: The Power to Be Free – Discovering Life in the Spirit of Christ (Slide #1)**

**TITLE: “Life is A Highway”**

**TEXT: Joshua 1:1-9; Phil. 3:12-14**

**DATE: September 9, 2007**

## I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Well, welcome home, many of you, and welcome to the fall and to a brand new emphasis: THE QUEST.
1. Today marks the beginning of a journey – one that hopefully has been anticipated by many of you OR, if not, will become something you are excited to be a part of over the next forty days.
  2. Hope you came with your travelin’ shoes on with a sense of curiosity concerning where QUEST’s highway will take us.
  3. Over the next 40 days God is going to go on a trip with us, and so I hope you have your bags packed with all the necessary tools for the trip: **(Slide #2)**
    - a. You’re going to need a map – THE WORD OF GOD.
    - b. You’re going to need a good book – THE POWER TO BE FREE.
    - c. You’re going to need a good guide – THE HOLY SPIRIT.
    - d. And you’re going to need a good attitude – Prayer: GOD, ON THIS JOURNEY, TAKE ME WHERE YOU WANT ME TO GO AND HELP ME EMBRACE THE FULNESS OF ALL THAT YOU HAVE FOR ME.
    - e. Oh. . . I almost forgot. . . we’re going to need a travelin’ song: **Video Clip – Life is a Highway from CARS.**
    - f. (Hope you don’t mind a little Rascal Flatts to get us going down the highway.
- B. QUEST. So what’s it all about? Where will this journey take us over the next 40 days? Why a quest?
- C. Think with me for a few moments: EVERYONE IS ON A QUEST, AREN’T THEY? **(Slide #3)**
1. Look around you and think about the people you interact with every day. They’re all on quests, highways of life, missional marches, if you will.
  2. Our world is like a map with multiple roads leading to multiple destinations – the roads are the highways people are traveling on and the destinations are their QUEST – their anticipated goal.
  3. Think with me about different quests of life:
    - a. There are educational quests – traveled pathways that lead to higher intelligence as a goal.
    - b. There are vocational quests – pathways that lead people toward their desired jobs.
    - c. There are entertainment quests – routes that lead people to greater pleasure.
    - d. There are special interest quests – those interested in preserving something (a manatee, a tree, an owl, the environment, life in the womb, peace)
    - e. There are financial quests – routes that will lead people to financial security now and in the future.
    - f. There are material quests – the journey to possess the most and newest toys.
    - g. There are spiritual quests – they come in many forms. Not all of them are quests for a Christian God. In our world there are multiple gods and multiple pathways to finding those gods.
  4. Bottom line: LIFE IS A JOURNEY. It’s not just any journey; it’s a journey with a particular destination in mind. The hope for everyone traveling down their road of life is that they will

arrive at their destination, relatively unscathed, and soon.

- D. Well, this morning we acknowledge the existence of life as a quest. We also acknowledge that for us gathered here we share a common quest: To travel the highway of God until we reach our final destination, heaven.
  - 1. It's an exciting and fulfilling quest - traveling with God.
  - 2. It is also a journey that has "mini-quests" along the way: smaller mountains to climb, sub-goals to achieve, temporal victories to be won.
- E. O.K, so we have established the fact that everyone is on a QUEST, our quest is a shared one – traveling the highway of God over various mountains and valleys until we reach heaven.
- F. The QUEST is a given! What isn't a given – and thus this series – is an understanding of the primary travel tools needed to help make our God given/personally chosen quest a success. **(Slide #4)**
  - 1. Our goal is to find in these 40 days a guide who can guarantee a successful Christian life.
  - 2. Our goal is to find a love that can sustain us.
  - 3. Our goal is to find a life that is in line with God's intended purpose for us.
  - 4. Our goal is to tap into a power that will see us through.
  - 5. Our goal is to discover a character that is consistent with our calling - the character of Christ.
- G. Well, to get us into the mood of a journey, I want us to look at a story in the Bible of a man who was certainly on a quest: The story of Joshua.

## II. JOSHUA – A MODEL “QUEST-ER” **(Slide #5)**

- A. **Read with me the words of our text found in Joshua 1:1-9.**
- B. I suppose I've preached from this passage of scripture at least a half dozen times in various places, including at least one here, but I have to tell you, every time the Lord leads me to these words there is a feeling of excitement that wells up within me.
  - 1. The words of found in this first chapter of Joshua are worthy of days, if not weeks, of meditation and study.
  - 2. I'm fully convinced that if a person wanted to, they could preach from Joshua chapter 1 every Sunday for two month and never run out of material – in fact, at the end of two months a person would most likely say: “We're going to stay here for a few more weeks.”
  - 3. Just think with me for a few moments on the themes of this chapter:
    - a. God's faithfulness to His promises.
    - b. The promises of God: victory, power, presence, possession, care, protection, etc.
    - c. The call to courage.
    - d. The call to obedience.
    - e. The call to holiness – do not depart from the law.
    - f. There's a very detailed description of biblical chains of authority that is outstanding – notice how throughout the entire first chapter every person was obedient and subservient to their authority – God honors that.
    - g. There's the theme of faith or trust
    - h. I could go on, but already we can see in just these few moments that I have mentioned 12 themes – that's three month's worth of sermons.
  - 4. Folks, does God's word thrill you soul? It should. This text thrills my soul and stirs my blood and revs up my engine.
  - 5. I love the way each verse seems to carry so much truth and creates so much thought – there are no wasted words here; they all carry weight.

- C. As we begin our quest together, there is a two verses we want to hone in on this morning that are classic quest verses – verses 2-3.
1. Listen to what is said in these verses (God is speaking to Joshua): **(Slide #6) “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them – to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.” (Slide #7 - Return to previous slide)**
  2. If a person is looking for tame words, and then don't read Joshua 1:2-3; there's nothing tame or insignificant about these words.
  3. Let me put it this way: those two verses held within them at least fifty years of meaning all in a flash in time. They were words that spoke simultaneously to a past, present, and future – all on a continuing highway of life.
- D. I tried to think of a similar example of a statement that may be compared to this one, but to a lesser degree. I think I found one. It goes like this: “Nancy, you need to go on over to the birthing area, it's time to have the baby” – words then passed on to me.
1. Now think about those words and what all they mean in a split second in time.
  2. They spoke of a history and a answer to prayer:
    - a. they flash back in time to the years we prayed that God would give to us a second child and didn't.
    - b. They remind us that one day when Nancy thought she was sick, she was actually pregnant, and the joy that flooded our hearts.
    - c. It reminds us of the fun it was telling Abby she was going to have a brother or a sister and then the fun of looking having the sonogram taken and discovering that it would be a baby sister.
    - d. The months of moving Abby to a new room and preparing a nursery.
    - e. The months of pregnancy – a term we use to mean expectancy.
    - f. They spoke of days of goodness as we relished the goodness of God in giving to us a second miracle of joy.
  3. They spoke of a present:
    - a. Very soon labor would begin.
    - b. There was some hard work to be done on Nancy's part to bring this miracle into the world.
    - c. They don't call it labor for no reason at all – the immediate task that went with that announcement was labor and pain.
  4. They spoke of a future:
    - a. Soon we would hold in our hands God's gift.
    - b. Soon Christa Joy Lain would become more than a promise – she would become a reality.
    - c. Soon we would experience a newborn, then an infant, then a toddler, then an child, then a teen, then a college bound young lady, then a young adult, then wife and mother and on and on the list goes.
  5. In those words, “Nancy, it's time to have the baby” there is an entire journey of excitement captured in a moment in time.
- E. Joshua 1:2-3 are words just like that. . . .only even bigger.
- F. Think with me about the impact of those words upon Joshua, a faithful “QUEST-ER.”
- G. **For Joshua, the words of God carried with them a history. (Slide #8)**
1. Remember with me the highway already traveled leading up to this critical moment in the live of Joshua and the nation of God.
  2. Joshua was there when Moses came into Egypt and challenged Pharaoh - he saw the ten plagues,

the resistance of Pharaoh and the final release.

3. Joshua was there when they walked out of Egypt into freedom.
4. Joshua knew of the promise – a promise of a new land for God’s people, a chosen land.
5. Joshua was there where the Red Sea’s parted and they escaped the Egyptian army.
6. Joshua was there when the Ten Commandments were given as a gift.
7. Joshua was there when water came from a rock and when manna came from heaven.
8. Joshua was there when they came to the Jordan and was one of the spies who went in to see what they were about to face.
9. Joshua was one of two who knew the land was for the taking, because God had promised it.
10. He was there when God’s people turned back and it cost them 40 years in the desert and an entire generation of death without living in the promise land.
11. All the time he was there, all through those years, Joshua also knew that God still promised entry into the promised land – and he held on to that hope for more than four decades.
12. Imagine with me the thoughts of Joshua when he heard God say: “get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them – to the Israelites.”
13. The 40 year journey suddenly became worth it, all of the hope suddenly became reality, history became present, and Joshua’s heart must have been on the verge of an explosion of excitement.
14. Contained in those two verses must have been a cumulative history that made the announcement unbearably exciting.
15. I am reminded this morning, as we prepare to go on a quest together, that just the announcement of such an adventure for each of us carries with it a history – each of our histories will speak to the journey and shape it in a specific way for us.
16. The common experience for each of us, if we will allow it, is that the Quest will give to each of us a new understanding of the glories of God and His kindness and provisions in our life.

H. **For Joshua, the words of God carried with them a present reality. (Slide #9)**

1. Look with me at the words again and here what they say: **“Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give them – to the Israelites.”**
2. While the Joshua’s history all came up to that moment in time to prepare Joshua and to shape his response, the reality of the words are apparent.
3. For forty years the people had been wandering aimlessly, waiting for the disobedient to die, they had just heard a parting word from Moses followed by his death and burial, and the people are camped out by the Jordan River.
4. The past promise suddenly became a reality: get up and get all the people up and get ready to cross the Jordan.
5. Think with me: can you remember times when you have spent weeks or even months planning for an event and then how you felt the day of the event – a rush of adrenalin, a quiver of fear, a rising up of excitement, and wondering if all was ready.
6. The best example I can think of is a wedding – you plan for months, sometimes years, and then when the day comes there’s this awkward feeling of excitement and fear and joy and nervousness.
7. When ones quest enters into the now, reality is a wakeup call. The time had come for Joshua.
8. Putting it into perspective a little more, so we don’t lose sight of the reality of Joshua’s task, remember these things:
  - a. It says nowhere in the scriptures that the giants that were there when they originally scouted out the land were no longer present.

- b. We know as we read on that there are plenty of fortified cities.
  - c. We know as we read on that there is still an abundance of Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites – and they all like to fight.
  - d. We know as we read on that the camp was not cleansed of all men of sin.
  - e. All these obstacles still stood in the way as the announcement was made.
9. But listen for I tell you something absolutely true: When God announces that it's time to move on one's quests in life, it's gonna be a good time, for God does not call us into defeat, but amazing victory.
10. In fact, listen to what God goes on to say in **verse 3: "I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses."**
11. That, my friends, is a word one can move on.
12. I am reminded this morning, as we prepare to go on a quest together, that today is a day of excitement: We are going to go on a quest and God has initiated the quest. Today is the day when it all begins. Today is a day of excitement for adventure is at hand for all who are willing to step out with God and experience His blessings. **THIS IS THE DAY OF ADVENTURE!**
- 13.** Lastly, it is critical that we note this about Joshua's quest. . . .
- I. For Joshua, the words of God carried with them a guaranteed future. **(Slide #10)**
- 1. The past informed the present, the present looks forward to the promise.
  - 2. It is here where I could go on for some time, but let me sum up in brief what we see in our text this morning. . . and it's exciting.
  - 3. As God announced the beginning of Joshua's next leg in his life's journey, He did so with these treasured promises:  
First, God promised a Possession – you will own the Promised Land.  
Second, God promised Power – no one would be able to stand against them,  
Third, God promised His Presence – I will never leave you nor forsake you.
1. In other words, God made it clear that as Joshua followed His lead, that He would give to Joshua all the tools he needed to be victorious in the walk.

**THE QUEST IS AT HAND – HEAR THE EXCITING NEWS: (Slide #11)**

- A. Today we begin a quest.
- 1. It may not seem as monumental as Joshua's, but there are several things that are common.
  - 2. Our quest has a historical foundation.
  - 3. Our quest can become a present joy and anticipation.
  - 4. Our quest will offer to us tools along the way that will enable us to have the power to be free in Christ as we discover life in the Spirit of Christ.

While on the surface it may seem like our quest is not nearly as big. But let me tell you, we may need this quest more than Joshua did. We've been in a desert for a pretty long time ourselves and God wants to offer to us days of promise. Question is. . . Will we take the journey? It's up to you.

These things I would suggest to make the journey the most successful: **(Slide #12)**

Every day we must take a look at the map – God's Word. There is a suggested passage for each day in our book.

Every day we need to use our traveling book – The Power to be Free.

Every day we need to seek the travel guide – ask every day for a fresh awareness and filling of the Holy Spirit.

Every day we need to spend time in prayer: I challenge you to at least 30 minutes in prayer every day.

Here's one last challenge: ask God to give you five names of people outside the church that you will contact by e-mail, letter or phone and ask them to pray for you every day for the next 40 days. Finally, make a commitment today that you will do whatever God asks you to do – commit to stay true to God's quest for you!